

The 'Eed Offering

Call To Islam Research

Introduction:

Definition:

One of the important acts of worship on 'Eed ul-Adhaa and the subsequent three days (days of *Tashreeq*) is the *udhhiyah* (sacrifice). The *udhhiyah* or *dhahiyyah* refers to the camels and cattle (cows, sheep, and goats) that are slaughtered on the day of *an-Nahr* and the days of *Tashreeq* as a sacrificial offering to Allaah (Subhanahu wa ta'ala). It is derived from *dhawah* (mid-morning), the beginning of the time period in which it is performed.

Merit And Importance:

Allaah (Subhanahu wa ta'ala) mentioned the sacrifice together with the first and foremost worship in Islaam: the prayer. This is a clear indication of its great importance. Thus He ordered His Messenger to slaughter the sacrifices by saying:

"...Pray Unto Your Lord and slaughter your sacrifice.." ¹

And Allaah (Subhanahu wa ta'ala) said:

"Say: my salaah (prayer), sacrifice, life, and death are for Allaah the Lord of the people. He has no partners; with this I have been commanded and I am the first of the Muslims." ²

Ruling:

The general consensus of the Muslim scholars is that the *udhhiyah* is an important *Sunnah*, and worship called for in the Law of Allaah (Subhanahu wa ta'ala). However, they differ as to whether it is *nafl* (voluntary) or *waajib* (mandatory) for those who can afford it. The opinion that it is *waajib* is more correct based on the following evidence.

The Messenger (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) prevented capable people who chose not to sacrifice from offering the 'Eed prayer with him. He would not do this unless they have neglected a *waajib* act. Abu Hurayrah (Radiya 'Llahu 'anhu) reported that the Messenger (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) said:

"He who has the capacity to sacrifice, but chooses not to, may not approach our prayer place on 'Eed." ³

Regarding this *hadeeth*, *Imaam* ash-Shawkaanee (Rahimahu 'Llah) said:

¹ Al-Kawthar (109):2

² Al-An'aam (6):162-163

³ Recorded by Ibn Maajah, Ahmad, and others; authenticated by al-Albaanee (Saheeh Ibn Maajah no.2533).

"Prohibiting the one who could afford to sacrifice, but did not do so, from approaching the *musallaa* indicates that he must have left off a *waajib*, as it becomes useless to offer the *salaah* without this *waajib*." ⁴

Jundub Bin Abdillaah al- Bujalee (Radiya 'Llahu 'anhu) narrated that he witnessed the *Adhaa* with Allaah's Messenger (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam). As soon as he (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) completed his 'Eed prayer, he noticed that some sacrifices had already been slaughtered before he finished his prayer. So he said:

"For those who have slaughtered their sacrifice before we prayed, let them slaughter other ones instead. And those who have not slaughtered yet, let them do so now, in the Name of Allaah." ⁵

This command from the Prophet (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) indicates the *wujoob* (obligation) of the sacrifice. Also, Makhnaf Bin Sulaym (Radiya 'Llahu 'anhu) narrated that Allaah's Messenger (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) said:

"Every household is required to offer a sacrifice every year,..." ⁶

As indicated earlier, some scholars take the position that the sacrifice is not obligatory, but is only recommended for those who can afford it. The basis for that opinion is that some of the *Sahaabah*, including Abu Bakr (Radiya 'Llahu 'anhu) and Umar (Radiya 'Llahu 'anhu) did not consider it *waajib*.⁷ They also rely on the *hadeeth* of Jaabir (Radiya 'Llahu 'anhu) who reported, "After the *khutbah*, Allaah's Messenger (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) sacrificed a ram with his own hand, saying:

"*Bismillaah, wallaahu Akbar* (in the Name of Allaah; Allaah is the Greatest); this is for me and for those of my Ummah (nation) who did not sacrifice." ⁸

However, in the light of the above evidence this *hadeeth* should be understood to apply only to those who did not have the ability to sacrifice. This demonstrates the mercy of Allaah (Subhanahu wa ta'ala) who did not want to prevent the reward for those who are financially incapable. They also rely on the *hadeeth* of Umm Salamah (Radiya 'Llahu 'anha) below. That *hadeeth* links the sacrifice to the will or intention of the Muslim, which may imply that it is optional and not *waajib*. However, this argument is not strong enough to refute the preceding evidence ⁹, especially when one looks at the following *aayah* that attaches an obligation (following the Straight Path) to the will of a person:

"For those of you who will to follow the Straight Path." ¹⁰

Regulations For The Person Offering Sacrifice:

Good Earning:

⁴ Review Nayl ul-Awtaar

⁵ Muslim

⁶ Recorded by Ahmad and others; judged *hasan* by al-Haafiz in *Fath ul-Baaree* 10:4.

⁷ Recorded by al-Bayhaquee; authenticated by al-Albaanee in *Irwa' ul-Ghaleel* 4:344-355.

⁸ Ahmad, Abu Daawood and others; authenticated by al-Albaanee (*Irwa' ul-Ghaleel* no.1138)

⁹ See Ibn Taymiyyah's discussion of this in al Fataawee 23:162-164.

¹⁰ At-Takweer 81:28

As in the case for any charity that one does with the hope of pleasing Allaah (Subhanahu wa ta'ala) one should make sure that his earnings and the money with which he purchases the sacrifice are good, otherwise the sacrifice would not be accepted, because;

"Allaah (Subhanahu wa ta'ala) is Tayyib (Good) and accepts only that which is tayyib.." ¹¹

Avoid Cutting Hair Or Nails:

The one who plans to sacrifice (normally the head of the household) is prohibited to cut his hair or nails from the first of *Dhul-Hijjah* until he offers the sacrifice. Umm Salamah (Radiya 'Llahu 'anha) reported that the Messenger (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) said:

"For the one who has a slaughtering to perform (on 'Eed) then, once the hilaal (crescent) of *Dhul-Hijjah* is observed, let him not cut any of his hair or nails until he sacrifices."

And in another narration:

"Once the Ten days start, for those of you who have the intention to sacrifice, let them not cut any of their hair or nails until they sacrifice.." ¹²

This prohibition is the opinion of the majority of the scholars of the Righteous Predecessors. It includes pulling or burning the hair of the head, the armpits, the moustaches or the pubic hair.

Time And Place:

The time of slaughtering the sacrifice starts after the '*Eed salaah*. Anything slaughtered before that is not acceptable as an *udhhiyah*. Anas (Radiya 'Llahu 'anhu) reported that the Messenger (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) said:

"He who slaughtered before the prayer (of 'Eed) has only slaughtered (normal meat) for his house, and should slaughter again. But the one who did it after the prayer has indeed completed his sacrifice and conformed to the Sunnah of the Muslims." ¹³

And al-Baraa reported that the Messenger (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) said:

"The first thing that we do on this day (al-Adhaa) is to pray. Then we go to slaughter. The one who does this has indeed complied with our Sunnah; but the one who slaughtered earlier had only offered some meat for his family, and it does not count as a sacrifice." ¹⁴

This time extends through the days of *Tashreeq* until the sunset of the third day after '*Eed ul-Adha*. Jubayr Bin Mut'im (Radiya 'Llahu 'anhu) reported that the Messenger (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) said:

¹¹ Recorded by Muslim via Abu Hurayrah (Radiya 'Llahu 'anhu)

¹² Muslim and others

¹³ Al-Bukhaaree

¹⁴ Al-Bukhaaree and Muslim

"All the days of Tasreeq are slaughtering days." ¹⁵

Place Of The Sacrifice:

It is recommended to slaughter the animal at the *musallaa* (grounds where the 'Eed prayer is performed), as the Prophet (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) did so.¹⁶ However, for those performing *Hajj*, they slaughter wherever they reside in Minaa, as he (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) said:

"I have slaughtered here, but all of Minna is a place for slaughtering; and all the mountain passes of Makkah are permissible pathways and places for slaughtering. So slaughter wherever you reside." ¹⁷

Animals That May Be Sacrificed:

There are various animals that can be used as sacrifice. Allaah's Messenger (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) and his companions (Radiya 'Llahu 'anhu) sacrificed camels and cattle (cows, sheep, and goats). Allaah's Messenger (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) slaughtered sixty three she-camels on the day of Sacrifice (i.e. al-Adhaa).¹⁸ Also, Allaah's Messenger (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) sacrificed a cow on behalf of his wives; and he sacrificed two white rams.¹⁹

One Goat For The Household:

A man can sacrifice one goat for himself and his household. Abu Ayyoob al-Ansaaree (Radiya 'Llahu 'anhu) was asked about the sacrifice during the time of the Messenger (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam), and he said: "During the time of the Prophet (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) one man used to sacrifice a goat for himself and his household. They used to eat and feed other people. Later on, people started to boast in their sacrifice as you see now." ²⁰

Sharing Larger Animals:

Seven households can share in a cow or a camel. Allaah's Messenger (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) said:

"One cow covers seven people, and one camel covers seven people (as a sacrifice)." ²¹

Healthy And Good Looking Animals:

Being an act of worship and an offering to Allaah, the sacrifice should be the best animal that one can find and afford. The Prophet (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) used to choose for his sacrifice good-looking animals that have no defects. The best kind of animals to sacrifice would be a white ram with horns, with blackness

¹⁵ Ahmad, Ibn Hibbaan, and others. Authenticated by al-Albaanee with its collective narrations (*as-Saheehah* no. 2476).

¹⁶ Al-Bukhaaree and others

¹⁷ Muslim and others

¹⁸ Muslim

¹⁹ Al-Bukhaaree and Muslim.

²⁰ At-Tirmithi, Ibn Maajah, and others; authenticated by al-Albaanee (*Irwa' ul-Ghaleel* no. 1142).

²¹ Muslim

around the eyes and in its legs. This is the description of the animals that the Prophet (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) liked and sacrificed.²²

Unacceptable Defects:

The sacrifice should not have an obvious defect of the following: one-eyed, sick, limping, or very thin. Al-Baraa' Bin Aazib (Radiya 'Llahu 'anhu) reported that Allaah's Messenger (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) said:

"Four animals are not allowed for udhhiyah: that which is obviously sick, that which is obviously limping, and that which is very thin such that it does not have marrow in its bones."²³

Also Ali (Radiya 'Llahu 'anhu) narrated that the Prophet (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) did not allow sacrificing an animal whose ear was cut from the front or the back or center.²⁴

Castrated Animals:

It is permissible to sacrifice a castrated animal. Abu Raafi (Radiya 'Llahu 'anhu) narrated that the Messenger (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) sacrificed two white castrated rams.²⁵

Age Of The Sacrifice:

The Prophet (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) encouraged his companions to sacrifice full-grown animals. But he permitted sacrificing the young sheep. Uqbah Bin Aamir (Radiya 'Llahu 'anhu) narrated that the Messenger (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) divided sacrificial animals among the Companions (after a battle), and his share was a young sheep. He complained about this (fearing that it may not be acceptable as a sacrifice) saying: "O Allaah's Messenger (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam)! I have only gotten a young sheep." He said, "*Sacrifice it!*"²⁶

Also, Mujaashi (Radiya 'Llahu 'anhu) narrated that the Messenger (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) said: "*A young sheep is as acceptable as a full-grown goat.*"²⁷

These and other authentic hadeeth indicate the following regarding the acceptable age for the sacrifice:

- A. Camels, cows and goat should be *thaniyy* (full grown) or older.²⁸
- B. Sheep can be *jatha* (young) or older.²⁹

²² Muslim.

²³ Recorded in the four *Sunans* and others; authenticated by al-Albaanee (*Irwa' ul-Ghaleel* no. 1142).

²⁴ Recorded by Ahmad and others, judged *hasan* by al-Halabee.

²⁵ Recorded by Ahmad; authenticated by al-Albaanee (*Irwa' ul-Ghaleel* no 1147).

²⁶ Al-Bukhaaree and Muslim

²⁷ Recorded by Abu Daawood and Ibn Maajah; authenticated by al-Albaanee (*Irwa' ul-Ghaleel* no. 1146)

²⁸ *Thaniyy*: Full grown. It is an animal which is old enough to lose its front teeth. For camels, this is approximately after completing five years; for cows and goats, it is approximately after completing two years.

²⁹ *Jatha*: Young. It is an animal which is at such an age that it does not have any new teeth growing to replace old ones. For camels, this is at the beginning of their fifth year, for cows at about the beginning of their third year, for goats at about the beginning of their second year, and for sheep between six months and one year.

Colour Of The Sacrifice:

White animals with some darkness are preferable over black ones for sacrifice. Abu Hurayrah (Radiya 'Llahu 'anhu) reported that the Messenger (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) said:

"The blood of an unclear-white goat is more beloved by Allaah than that of two black ones." ³⁰

Manner of Conducting the Sacrifice:

Mercy to Animals:

One has to sharpen his knife very well before approaching the animal that he intends to slaughter. Then he should kill it quickly without extending its suffering. Shaddaad Bin Aws (Radiya 'Llahu 'anhu) narrated that the Messenger (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) said:

"Allaah has prescribed excellence in all matters. So even when you kill, do it in a good way. And when you slaughter, do it in a good way. Let the one of you sharpen his blade and put his slaughtered animal to rest (by being quick)" ³¹

Method Of Slaughtering The Sacrifice:

Anas (Radiya 'Llahu 'anhu) reported that the Messenger of Allaah (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) sacrificed two white rams with large horns. He slaughtered them himself, putting his foot on the side of the neck, and saying:

"Bismillaah, wallaahu Akbar (in the Name of Allaah; Allaah is the Greatest.)" ³²

And Aa'ishah narrated: "Allaah's Messenger (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) ordered a ram with horns, and black legs and eyes. When it was brought before him he said to me: *"O Aa'ishah, give me the knife."* Then he said: *"Sharpen it against a stone."* Which I did, then he took it, laid down the ram, and slaughtered it saying: *"Bismillaah. O Allaah, accept from Muhammad, Muhammad's family and Muhammad's Ummah."* ³³ And thus he sacrificed it." ³⁴

These *hadeeths* indicate that sheep are not slaughtered while standing or sitting, but are laid down. As for camels, Ibn Umar (Radiya 'Llahu 'anhu) reported that the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) is to slaughter while it is standing up, with the left foreleg tied. ³⁵

The above evidence further shows that the one who is slaughtering should make *tasmiyah* (to say: *Bismillaah*) and *takbeer*, and should put his foot on the side of the neck to make the killing easier.

³⁰ Recorded by Ahmad and al-Haakim; authenticated by al-Albaanee (*as-Saheehah* no. 1861).

³¹ Muslim and others

³² Al-Bukhaaree and Muslim

³³ The scholars have taken this as evidence that those who are incapable to sacrifice have all been covered by this Prophet's sacrifice.

³⁴ Muslim

³⁵ Recorded by al-Bukhaaree, Muslim, and Abu Daawood. Review *Iwraa' ul Ghaleel* no. 1150 by al-Albaanee

On this occasion, Allaah's Messenger (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) slaughtered his sacrifice by himself. It is best for one to conduct his sacrifice with his own hands. But one may have someone represent him in the slaughtering, as is indicated in Ali's *hadeeth* below.

Dispensing Of The Meat:

How to Divide the Meat:

Aa'ishah (Radiya 'Llahu 'anha) narrated that, at first, Allaah's Messenger (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) forbade people from saving or eating the sacrifices' meat for more than three days. Later on, he permitted that saying:

"I had previously forbidden you to save the meat of the sacrifices beyond three days, because of the poor Bedouins who came into al-Madeenah. But now I tell you: eat, save, and give away as sadaqah." ³⁶

This shows that one may eat some of the sacrifice, give some away as charity or a gift, and save some. There is no specified ratio for these allocations. The following *ayaat* only indicate to whom one may dispense it, without imposing ratio either:

"Eat from it and feed the unfortunate poor people." ³⁷

"Eat from it and feed the average (one who has just enough) and the poor people." ³⁸

Thus it is best to eat at least a little bit of one's sacrifice, and to give away to the needy as much as one can spare. This was the Prophet's (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) practice as is described in the *hadeeth* of Ali below.

Selling Part Of The Sacrifice?

It is not allowed to sell any part of the sacrificed animal. Abu Hurayrah (Radiya 'Llahu 'anhu) narrated that the Messenger (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) said:

"He who sells the hide of his sacrifice has no (acceptable) sacrifice." ³⁹

Even the butcher who cleans and cuts it may not take any of it as his pay. Ali Bin Abu Taalib (Radiya 'Llahu 'anhu) said:

"Allaah's Messenger (Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) ordered me to take care of his sacrificial camels, and to give away as sadaqah their meat, hide and entrails, and not to give the butcher any of it, saying:

"We shall pay him from us (separately)."" ⁴⁰

³⁶ Al-Bukhaaree, Muslim, Abu Daawood and others

³⁷ Al-Hajj (22):28

³⁸ Al-Hajj (22):36

³⁹ Recorded by Al-Haakim; authenticated by al-Albaanee (*Saheeh ul-Jaami'* no. 6118).

⁴⁰ Al-Bukhaaree, Muslim, and others (*Iwraa' ul Ghaleel* no. 1161 by al-Albaanee)